BALLADE OF AN OLD SPINET.

Within an upper room it stands, A garret corner grim and gray, Where spiders spin their siken strands Molested by no sunlight ray: Yet dames and damsels, I dare say, Have loved its music: to and fro Their lily hands were wont to stray On that old spinet, years upo.

I often fancy ghostly bands A stately minuet essay
At dead of night, while unseen hands
Their long-forgotten skill display.
The little children; where are they?
For many must have danced, I know, To measures fanciful and gay From that old spinet years ago.

Some cavalier of other lands To it once sang his roundelay, Regardless of the reprimands
Of her whose heart he longed to sway; Or some despairing genius may Have made it sharer of his woe And bowed his weary head to prav

Behold, it still resists decay: There's music in it still, although The bands are dust that used to play On that old spinet, years ago.

O'er that old spinet, years ago

A FEARFUL ORDEAL.

Changed Into an Old Man at the Age of Thirty-Six.

"Dick" Allen, Although Possessed of Iron Nerve, Meets With an Adventure Which Wrecks His Physical System.

Occupying a sent in the readingroom of a down-town hotel one day tast week, says the Alta California, there might have been observed a seemingly aged gentleman, whose hair was gray and whose cheeks were shriveled. A pallor of death was on his face, and frequently the muscles of his features would twist convulsively. His name was Richard J. Allen, and he registered himself as hailing from Toronto, Ont.

Five years ago Richard Alben, or Dick Allen, as he was familiarly known by his associates, owned, or at least claimed and occupied, a stock range of considerable area in Southern Arizona, the Mexican boundary line being distant but a few miles. He owned a large number of beef cattle and was considered well-to-do.

Among the rough population of the border Allen was a power. He was most generously gifted by nature, having a well-knit, athletic frame and a mind well stored with knowledge. But it was Allen's nerve which secured for him recognition and affluence amid the cactus-flecked plains of Arizona and New Mexico-a nerve which knew no flinching even in the face of death. The greasers and Indians soon learned to dread the tall stockman, for in more than one encounter they had come off badly worsted, and more than one unmarked grave on the Mexican frontier bears silent witness to Allen's unerring aim, for he never hesitated to kill when he thought himself justified. Very little is considered justification among the class with which Allen was associated. So greatly was he feared and respected by his wild companions and neighbors that nothing bearing his brand was ever molested, and the most daring of the cowboys and outlaws seldom tempted death by a too prolonged argumen with him.

As an illustration of his fron nerve it may be related that at one time in 1884 he was given warning to keep away from a certain small settlement some ten miles from his ranch, he having incurred the displeasure of a Allen smiled grimly as he read the warning, then strapped on his revolver and set forth for the hostile hamles. He tied his horse in the rear of a saloon and started to enter when a pistol shot was heard and a bullet whistled passed his head. Allen turned. Not more than twenty feet away stood "Dan," a half-breed Indian, with a revolver in his hand. As Allen turned three more balls passed in close proximity to his head. He knew the Indian had one shot left. With a scornful smile he said: "Fire again,

you-, and fire lower." The Indian did so and the next instant his spirit had left the arid plains of Arizona forever. Then Allen strode into the saloon, where at least half a dozen of his enemies were gathered, and demanded to know who sent him the warning. No one answered and after roundly cursing the gang for their cowardice he left and went home. For two months he battled hard with death, for the last bullet fired by the Indian had lodged in his right breast, almost piercing the lung.

It was some three mouths after this occurrence that Allen met with a mishap that hurled him from the heights of a sturdy manhood to an existence little removed from death. It was in the summer of 1885. All day long Allen had been hard at work branding a lot of yearling steers at a point some twenty miles from his dugout, and at night he was completely worn out. It was a wearisome gallop from the heanding-place to his cheerless habitation, for the air was sultry and the baked ground gave forth an intense heat. It was nearly eleven o'clock when the stockman reach his destination, and glad was he when his pony he was at liberty to retire. He was about to creep into bed when his quick ear detected a slight noise in the direction of his stable, and he knew at once that prowiers were about Seizing his revolver he started for tite stable on his hands and knees, for he intended to kill and not to alarm, having no garments on other than his undershirt. The noise at the stable continued and Allen moved rapidly toward the sound. So intent was he on investigating the noise that he failed to notice where his path led him, and suddenly without warning he felt something beneath han give way and he was precipitated to the bottom of a "played-out" well, a distance of some twenty-five feet. The well had been

closed with a few rotten boards which, giving way underneath Allen's great weight, had caused the catas

For a moment Allen was stunned The skin of his body had been abraded in a dozen places and every bone ached with the force of the fall. The stockman was almost overwhelmed with rage, for in this accident he saw himself rendered helpless and knew the thieves, if any there were, would not leave as much behind as a lariat and might, should they discover his position, kill him. With a muttered curse of despair he turned to look for his revolver, determined to fight to the last should an attack be made upon him. As he turned he saw gleaming and flashing in the murky darkness a pair of small, beady eyes, and poor Allen's heart almost stood still, for a warning hiss and rattle told him he had in the well as a companion a rattlesnake. The reptile rattled angrily and moved his head from side to side in an uncertain way, and then behind Allen there came an answering sound and he knew he had two reptiles to cope

The snake behind him soon crossed the well and joined its mate, the two meanwhile keeping up an incessant rattle. Their slumbers had been rudely disturbed and they seemed determined to resent it if possible.

with instead of one.

Allen stood as if petrified. He knew a movement on his part meant an attack, and this attack to him must result in death. And such a death! He imagined himself bitten by the snakes and his fancy depicted a frenzied being with veins filled with burning poison wildly grappling with the scaly, venomous reptiles, and striving with the desperation of the awful fever to mount the hard sides of the well and die on the plain above, beneath God's smiling stars. The sweat poured from the poor man's body in streams. The snakes gave forth that musky odor peculiar to them, and this, taken with the closeness and warmth of the air, produced a sensation as of suffo-

In a moment, still hissing angrlly, one of the snakes began to move, and Allen saw its glistening eyes at his feet. The clammy thing crawled over his bare feet and circled around his naked legs. The creature seemed to like the warmth of Allen's body and stopped a moment. Then it slowly began to ascend his limbs to his body, and soon the terrible eyes were looking into those of Allen and they seemed to burn through his brain. Up over his face the creature moved its head and then encountered Allen's crisp and cury hair. With an angry rattle the snake drew back his head, and Allen, knowing it would strike, raised his hand as quick as lightning and gripped the creature by the throat. With the other hand he grasped the rattles, and then he slowly, surely strangled the creature to death, though the fearful effluvia which it emitted almost caused him to faint. For half an hour he held the snake firmly; he saw the malignant light in its eyes grow dim and finally disappear, and then he knew one enemy at least was dead. But he dared not drop the dead snake, for the other had become uneasy at the disappearance of its mate and seemed on the point of starting out in search. The fierce, glaring eyes moved from side to side, the rattle was seldom still, and Allen never for a moment took his eyes from those hostile orbs.

For hours he stood thus, con with a feverish thirst, his nerves at a terrible tension and his eyes strained and almost bursting. Then the sky above him began to light up and a little ray of sunlight danced on the western wall of his underground prison. gang of notorious cut-throats there. In a few moments the well was quite light, and then Allen and his remaining enemy saw each other at the same instant. The snake colled and sprang, but Allen was too active. He stopped to one side and let the snake go by him, and then, with a small club, crushed out the venomous life forever. Then it was that Allen's great nerve gave way. He yelled and shricked and cursed and tore in a mad delirium; and when neighbors, attracted by his cries, rescued him an hour later he was frothing at the mouth, bleeding at the nose, and the snakes were torn to shreds.

> For weeks he lay in his cabin on the outer edge of death, but his sturdy constitution stood by him and he recovered, though he was but a wreck of his former self. His neighbors "rounded-up" what little stock he had left-for the thieving residents of the frontier were quick to take advantage of his helplessness-and Allen left for New England to recover, if possible, his former health. But the shock was too severe and Allen will never be a man again. At the age of thirty-six he is as infirm as a man of seventy. and his life is devoid of pleasure. He can not remain long in one place, for his nerves demand a constant change of scene, and he is a homeless, helpless wanderer. Soon death will come to his relief and then, perhaps, Allen will learn why this dreadful plague was

visited upon him. MRS. MARGARET WILSON ULIPHANT, better known simply as Mrs. Oliphant, is now sixty years of age. She makes her home at Windsor, and this, together with the fact that she is a Scotchwoman, has made her quite a favorite of the Queen, who reads all her novels, or rather has them read to her, and who takes every occasion to praise their healthy moral tone. Mrs. Oliphant is an was safely stabled for the night and amiable as well as an intellectual-looking woman, with strongly marked features and silver gray hair, which she half covers by the inevitable British matron's lace cap.

When the old drifts of the Ophir mine at Virginia City were opened the other day it was found that a tremendous growth of fungi had in some cases nearly closed the passages. It grew from the top and bottom, and the sides were clotted with it; but the fungi growing from the bottom was dif-ferent from the other. The foot-wall fungi had in several instances raised stones weighing from fifty to one hundred and fifty pounds, and some were held in the air at a height of over three feet. Some of the fungi resembled human hair, they were so fine; some were five or six feet long and as large as a broom handle; another kind terminated in a sort of bulbous blossom; others hung from the roof and locked like serpents. The heaviest growth was in the giry for years and the exputh had been | darkest parts.

BEATEN AT HIS GAME

An Old-Time Cowboy's First Case of Toothache.

Tired of Life on a Runch He Concocts : Scheme to Go to Denver-Leaving a Cattle Camp to Face a Dentist -A Joke That Didn't Work.

"Charlie" Metcalf is an old-time cowboy says the New York Tribune. One would not know it now to look at him, for he kicked off his spurs and discarded his som brero years ago. Nor would any one know that he had been a theatrical manager, a school-teacher, a steamship purser and a private secretary, but he has gone through all these experiences and many more. His first venture was cattle rasing. He had just been graduated from college when he went West to become a "cattle king." As he himself tells the story there were many ne nimself tells the story there were many circumstances which conspired to prevent his becoming much of a king. In the first place he put all his money he had into the business. Accordingly when some cattle thieves swooped down upon his camp one night and stampeded with the whole herd, the young cattle raiser found himself in the resistion where there were realized. the position where there was not only no power behind the king's throne, but no throne. In the language of the plains, he found himself after that reduced from the position of a cattle owner to a "cow puncher." In the course of the next four years he managed to branch out again, buying some hundred head. The following winter was something like a prolonged and wicked blizsard, and when spring came Colonel Metcaif (he was called "Colonel" on the plains because he had tried to get admitted to West Point, and although he failed dismally, he always boast ed that he passed his physical examination with credit) found himself the owner of just five bony, dried-up head of cattle. He could not sell them, for no one would buy them, so be turned them loose on the plains and again took to the saddle at fifty dollars a month, flour, spurs and lariat thrown in. This was in the spring of 1881.

The "Colonel," whatever his failings at cattle-raising, tells a good story. He fell to talking with a friend the other day about the toothache, and he told the story of the first and only case of toothache he ever had.
After briefly sketching his two failures at raising cattle, he described the winter that followed his return to "cow punching."

"The winter," he said, "was not less severe than that of the year before, and when June of 1882 finally came around we were a sorry looking lot. Every herder had begun the season with five bronches. Bronches are tough, but that winter settled them, and it would have settled us, too, if we hadn't had plenty of blankets. I never saw any thing like the way it rained that spring. Our ciothes, tents and blankets got so soaked that for weeks we had not had a dry rag on us. I began to get pretty sick of being a cowboy, and what made my complaint worse was the fact that the girl to whom I was engaged was visiting relatives in Denver. I had not seen her for three years, and although my employer had promised me a week off when good weather came, there seemed to be no chance of going to Denver for a long time, for we were in a terrible fix. Our temporary camp was at the Old Battle Ground, on Big Sandy creek, where the Indian massacre ('massa-cree' every one calls it there) was committed in '60, by the First Colorado Cavalry, under Colonel Chivington. It was about all we could do to hang on to the ground to keep from slipping down the side of the gully. The cattle were stampeding every day, and we had to work all the time. To make matters worse, there warn't half enough bronchos to go around and we had to be on our feet a good deal of the time, a hard trial for a cowboy.

"I made up my mind to go to Denver, and I began to cudgel my brains to find some good excuse for deserting my 'outfit.'

I hit upon the toothache, and for three days I suffered untold agony when any of the men were around. I professed to be unable to eat, and the men began to feel alarmed about me. At the end of the three days I began to weaken. I could not starve to death and I thought that I must give up the toothache. I finally decided to take 'Whisky Hank,' the cook, into my confidence, and I made a clean breast of the whole thing to him. After that he brought me my meals when the men were all off 'punching' the cattle, which every day were becoming wilder than buffalces. I kept this up for a week when the head man came to me and said: 'See here, Colonel, you go to Denver and get that tooth out.' I protested that it would not be right for me to desert the camp at such a time, but he insisted, and finally I started.

"My employer was at River Bend, the ranch, near the Kansas Pacific, and I started for Kit Carson, the nearest railway station, twenty miles away, in great gice. I had not been in a town, big or little, for over a year, and when I struck Denver the place was not big enough to hold me. I got there in the morning and went straight to the St. James' Hotel. After feasting at breakfast, I lighted a eigar and stood on the front steps awhile, ust to see what civilized people looked like. I was just going down to the street to hurry around to Herman avenue, on Capitol hill, when I came face to face with my employer. For an instant I wished that I was back at the old battle ground, chasing cattle over handkerchief and clapped it up to my

cheek.
"'Foothache—terrible,' I murmured. " Toothache, eh?' he said, looking at me

keenly. 'Come with me and have it out.' "I hadn't the courage to say a word and followed him meekly around to the office of a dentist. I sat down in the chair in a state of utter collapse, pointed out a back tooth and groaned 'pull it.' The dentist had hard work to get that tooth out, for it was one of the best teeth that a man ever had. I had to pay two dollars for the operation, too, when the tooth was out and the dentist had soothed my wounded jaw my employer took me down to the station and saw me off on the next train for Kit Carson, bound for the camp. I never'dared to tell any of the boys how I got beaten at my game. Even the cook never learned the truth."

Dan suck is simply a man with his hands in his pockets and a pipe in his mouth, looking on to see how it is coming out. Good luck is a man of pluck, with his sleeves rolled up, and working to make it come out

The Use of the Telephone on Railways. A novel application of the telephone has been made on the railway between Saint Valerie sur Somme and Cayeux (France). with a view to facilitate communication between a train broken down on the line and the nearest station. Industries says the stations on this line are already in telephonic communication by means of an over head wire, and in the guard's van of an experimental train was fitted up a telephone, with battery of ten Leclanche cells and call bell. One pole of the battery is put to earth by being connected to the framework of the guard's van, and the other is jound in the usual way to the tele.

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